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Questions of the Development of the Organizational Structure of the Tank Troops

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by

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The necessity of constant study and research of the organizational forms of the types of armed forces and arms of troops is evoked by the rapid development of the means of armed combat and the changes taking place in the methods of its conduct. Therefore, it is no mere chance that in recent times, considerable attention is devoted to questions of improvement of the existing, and creation of a new, organization of troops in the pages of the military press, higher military-educational institutions and among the troops.

Quite properly, in our opinion, General of the Army A. S. Zhadov noted in his article that modern armies are more and more being equipped with the latest means of armed combat, which require corresponding organizational development, and that the problems of the improvement of the organization of the troops are now posed by life itself.[1]

At the Military Academy of the Armored Troops, a military-scientific conference was conducted, where the problems of the employment of tank troops and the prospects of the future development of their organizational forms were examined.

Marshal of Armored Troops P.A. Rotmistrov, in his lecture, convincingly showed the basic directions which the improvement of the organizational structure of the tank troops should take. In the course of the work of the conference this question was subjected to wide discussion.

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In the present article, taking cognizance of the opinions expressed at the aforementioned conference and in the periodical military press, we would like to present several proposals as to the paths of future development of the operational forms of our tank troops.

The organizational forms of the tank troops must conform fully to the conditions and requirements of the conduct of operations of a missile/nuclear missile war with effective use of combat equipment. They must raise the offensive capabilities of the tank troops, ensuring the independent delivery by tank formations and large units of deep and powerful missile/nuclear and tank strikes with the aim of maximum destruction of the enemy and successful accomplishment of operational and combat tasks of the most diverse kind and intensity.

First of all, it is necessary to raise sharply the firepower and the penetrating ability of tank troops, which now must be understood as the aggregate of powerful nuclear fire and the swift strike of tank large units and units. This can be achieved by saturating the tank troops with organic missile units and subunits, having as armament missiles with great range and accuracy of destruction compared with those presently in being, increasing their total number, and also by creating new tank armament, capable in the course of combat of successfully destroying enemy objectives and eliminating the need for conventional artillery to the extent that it has been present up to this time. In the composition of tank troops, along with missile/nuclear means, it is important to have, not the usual tube artillery, but subunits and units of rocket artillery, capable of delivering massed fire against objectives not neutralized by missile/nuclear weapons and deployed on such areas that their destruction would require calling for concentrated fire of entire artillery or tank subunits. It is self-evident that the organic combination of tank and missile troops by amalgamating them into one easily controlled tank troop organism will give the greatest effect, if in addition we replace the existent armored equipment with new, more mobile vehicles, having better roadability and maneuverability, and create missile means with smaller overall dimensions than at present.

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The increase of firepower, striking force, mobility, and maneuverability will ensure the high mobility of the tank troops and their capability to conduct combat operations independently to a considerably large depth, at high speeds. Namely, this must be considered the most important thing in the future development of tank troops, the basis of which must be tank subunits and units and the missile troops paving the way for them. Saturation of tank troops with missile/nuclear weapons and new tank equipment will bring about a reduction in the personnel and auxiliary equipment, not taking part in combat directly. 50X1-HUM

We feel, that further development of the organizational forms of tank troops should also take the line of considerably increasing their ability to survive under conditions of a missile/nuclear war.

In a modern battle and operation, the least vulnerable to nuclear bursts are the tank crews (ekipazh) and missile launcher crews, (raschet) covered by heavy armor. To increase the offensive capabilities of the large units and formations of tank troops, along with equipping them with essentially new tank and missile armament, it is also necessary that the auxiliary organic means not differ from the new tanks in their antinuclear stability, maneuverability, and mobility.

Primary in ensuring the tank troops' viability will be the increase of their nuclear power, which, in the course of the operation, will allow them quickly and to a great depth, to neutralize reliably the enemy's nuclear means of attack.

On a level with increasing the mobility and defensibility of the tank large units and formations from the destructive factors of a nuclear burst, improving the viability of the tank troops will also promote establishment of the maximum possible uniformity of their organization.

Uniformity of units and large units, under modern conditions, must be viewed as an indication of the strength and stability of the organization of troops. It is achieved by unity of the form of organization of tank troops, the presence in the units and large units of similar type tank subunits and the maximum possible equality of the mobility and defensive characteristics of the different 50X1-HUM

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auxiliary combat equipment to those of the tanks, and also the presence in them of the minimum number of mechanized infantry in the new combat vehicles.

The subunits of mechanized infantry, antiair defense, rear services, security and command in the tank large units also should have increased roadability and their personnel should be covered with armor with new defensive features. The interests of increasing the viability of the tank large units also require an organizational change in the supporting subunits. For example, there is an urgent necessity to centralize the antiair defense means in large measure, which will considerably simplify the control of them and will ensure more dependable troop cover in the course of combat operations.

For the purpose of maintaining the constant combat effectiveness of the tank troops and, consequently, increasing their viability, it is required that a constant reserve of subunits and units be included in their complement.

It is also necessary organizationally and technically to ensure the capability of the tank units and large units to liquidate independently and quickly the results of enemy nuclear and chemical attack. This need may be answered by training the troops to take the proper measures and equipping tank units and large units with special, highly efficient organic means.

Great significance under modern conditions is attributed to the capability of the tank units and large units to, repair in a short time, armored and other equipment damaged as a result of massed missile/nuclear weapon strikes and conventional means of destruction. In view of this, it is necessary to have repair-rehabilitation subunits and units, equipped with high-efficiency means in the tank troops.

Increasing the tank troops' viability and that of the ground troops as a whole, to a significant degree, will promote the radical realignment of the system of control with the introduction of means of automation and mechanization, and also alteration of the organizational structure of staffs, directed toward elimination of some

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levels and increasing the mobility of the control points.

Finally, the reorganization of rear services subunits, units, and installations, wider use of air transport for support of swift maneuver and accomplishment of the tasks of supplying the troops in the course of vigorous and continuous combat operations - is one of the most important conditions for increasing their viability. With this aim, we consider it necessary to reinforce the tank army with military-transport aviation means.

Such, in our opinion, are the general principles, on the basis of which the organizational forms of the ground forces can be developed practically and above all those of tank formations, large units, and units.

We feel that the tank army's prospective organization may consist of five tank divisions, one missile brigade (division), one PVO division, separate reconnaissance units, and units of rear support, and also separate tank and mechanized units of the reserve of the army.

In a tank division there may be four tank regiments; in a regiment - three tank and one mechanized battalion or five tank and one mechanized company. With such variations of organization, the tank division loses the need for a motorized rifle regiment in it.

In a tank battalion (in the case of battalion organization) it is expedient to have three companies of 10 tanks each. In the absence of a battalion level, a tank company may consist of 16 tanks. In a division as a whole there may, accordingly, be 380 or 320 tanks and 100 or 60 infantry combat vehicles.

Calculations show that the number of personnel and auxiliary equipment in the tank army and division of the proposed organization will be considerably reduced (though the army will also include one more division than at the present time). On the whole, this will give the division and army great mobility.

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In the organization under discussion, a more efficient correlation of tank and mechanized subunits is foreseen.

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For example, there is one mechanized company to 3.5 - 4 tank, whereas in the present organization there is one motorized rifle company to 2.7 tank companies. In this, in the complement of the tank army the number of new infantry combat vehicles will not exceed 300 to 500 units, that is, there will be a considerable reduction compared to the number of armored personnel carriers (800 units), available at the present time.

The tank army of the proposed organization, in overall numbers of tanks, will exceed a US field army made up of nine divisions and our own combined arms army of two tank and three motorized rifle divisions. This will ensure it the capability of successfully accomplishing the tasks of modern operations, where engagements and battles will be predominantly of a tank nature. The presence of five divisions in the complement of an army will broaden its capabilities for delivering strikes and for participating in operations on two axes. For defeat of the enemy in a meeting engagement and accomplishment of other tasks it will not be necessary to call in all the forces of an army, which happens at the present time, with four divisions in an army. In addition, the army will be able to carry out wider maneuver with its large units.

The creation in the tank army of a reserve consisting of two tank and one mechanized regiment will provide the opportunity in the course of an operation for the timely reinforcement of one or another division and maintain its combat effectiveness, without drawing on units of the second echelon for this and without taking the whole division out of combat. The expediency of having a reserve will be seen especially in that case, when units of one of the divisions suffer heavy casualties from the enemy's nuclear weapons, in the operations of the army on a wide front, with great intervals between large units, etc. Do not forget, that the reserve regiments of the army will constantly be replenished from those units which are taken out of combat. Replacement of the personnel of reserve regiments should be carried out first of all by detachments of those who have recovered, and tanks - by tanks of the army maintenance pool.

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The mechanized regiment of the army reserve can be used as an airborne force and for the accomplishment of tasks which suddenly arise.

We have indicated above two possible variants of the organization of a tank regiment, with the battalion level and without it.

In our opinion, the battalion level of command in tank units should be abolished. We shall try to substantiate this.

First of all, let us note, that under the conditions of a nuclear/missile war the lowest tactical element which can accomplish tasks independently, and in the interests of which it is possible to employ nuclear/missile weapons must be considered to be the regiment. It, as a tactical unit, unites within itself the different arms of troops and means of combat, and has the necessary rear services. Now, when combat operations have become more maneuverable and acquired a clustered nature it is the regiment that must become the last level in which are carried out the most tightly coordinated operations of all forces and means and the direction of their efforts toward the fulfilment of combat missions. Therefore, the regiment is able to conduct combat operations on independent axes and considerably removed from the main forces of the division, cooperating during this, with tactical missile means and, when necessary, with aviation.

What, under these conditions is the role of the battalion level of command? Due to the fact that the combat operations of the battalion will be spread out over larger sectors than previously, the commander of the battalion will be unable to observe personally the course of combat operations of all subunits and directly organize and control the tank companies in combat.

Now the focal point of the organization of the attack and combat in depth has shifted to the company commander. The practice of combat training and tactical exercises shows that the commander and staff of a battalion, in organizing combat, basically duplicate all that is done by the commander and staff of a regiment. The battalion

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has no organic support means so it is reinforced by regimental means whose tasks are determined by the regimental commander. Therefore, the role of the battalion commander is now reduced only to organizing the attack, which is the function of the company commander. Besides, for independent accomplishment of tactical tasks, the battalion always needs reinforcement and the constant presence of rear services subunits.

Thus, we come to the conclusion that the battalion is an intervening level.

The tank battalion has three companies, always operating in the same "stereotyped" pattern of battle order, independent of the conditions of a situation as they actually develop. More often than not, in the first echelon, two companies operate, and in the second - one company. With considerable losses in tanks, the battalion battle order usually consists of one echelon (almost all the tanks "on the line"), with the detaching of several tanks to the reserve. In these cases the commanders of companies and platoons turn into commanders of regular line tanks. Consequently, the battalion cannot vary the pattern of the battle order, in connection with which maneuver in the course of battle is sharply restricted.

We must also contend with the fact, that the tank battalion is a compact and attractive tactical objective for delivery of strikes by nuclear/missile weapons. With any pattern of its battle order, a considerable portion of its subunits will receive hits from a nuclear warhead with a yield of 20 to 40 kilotons, after which the battalion will really lose its combat effectiveness. Combat effectiveness will also be reduced in the regiment in which, in this case, there are only two battalions remaining.

The tank regiment in the proposed organization, with five tank companies and one mechanized company in its complement, will be capable of carrying out wider maneuver of its subunits in the course of battle; concentrate its efforts on one or, if necessary, on several axes, and each time adopt that battle order which suits the actual conditions of the situation to the maximum degree. In

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case of destruction of one, or even two, tank companies by the enemy's nuclear weapons, the tank regiment will be significantly more combat effective than with the loss of one battalion in the present organization.

With the new regimental organization, without the battalion level, the time for organization of the battle will also be sharply reduced. The regimental commander, having made and announced his decision, will be occupied with the organization of the battle and the commander of the company directly with the organization of the attack. This organization will be more acceptable for future tank troops with fundamentally new tank weapons and improved missile means.

The chief factor determining the development of the organizational forms of the troops is nuclear/missile weapons, with the employment of which are created favorable conditions for the conduct of highly maneuverable combat operations. The nuclear/missile means now available in the tank division and tank army do not fully answer the requirements of modern operations and combat qualitatively. Of the six (R-170) missile mounts comprising the army missile brigade, it is conceivably possible to have not more than three constantly ready for launching, which, with only eight (R-30) missile launchers (raketnaya ustanovka) in the divisions, does not allow reliable destruction of the enemy in the zone of the army with missile fire. The inadequate maximum range of the organic (voyskovaya) missiles has an adverse effect on assuring the rapidity of operations of large units of the army and their independence in accomplishment of combat tasks, and also makes their participation in a massed army nuclear/missile strike more difficult. For this reason, organic missiles are obliged to move about unceasingly, within the combat formations of units, with the result that the effectiveness of their fire is sharply reduced, and they themselves are constantly under the threat of destruction by the enemy's conventional means.

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In our opinion, for the successful conduct of modern operations, taking into account the trend of future development of nuclear/missile weapons, another solution

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to the question of the availability of nuclear/missile means in the tank army is required.

First of all, the quantity of tactical and operational-tactical missile troops must be increased and their quality improved.

In the tank division it is necessary to have that number of missile mounts, which will ensure the conduct of independent combat operations to a considerable depth and at high speeds. Together with this, the missile means of divisions must be capable of executing maneuver by fire along the front and in the depth for the purpose of delivering massed nuclear strikes against the enemy jointly with army missile units. In our opinion, it is necessary to establish tank-missile subunits in the tank divisions, that is, to have tank missile mounts as armament.

Keeping in mind the prospective organization of tank large units, we figure that in each tank division the missile battalion (raketnyy divizion) must be replaced by a missile regiment (polk) of three tank-missile companies, with 4 to 6 mounts in each company, with a range of fire up to 100 km. A rocket battalion (reaktivnyy divizion) (three or four batteries of mounts of the "Grad" type) also should be included in the complement of a division.

In the army, instead of the missile brigade, it is necessary to have a missile division (brigade), composed of 3 or 4 regiments (battalions) of 4 to 6 mounts in each, with a range of fire up to 500 km.

Such an increase in the range of fire of tactical and operational-tactical missiles fills the requirements of supporting the combat operations of tank divisions to the depth of the task of the day, and of the tank army - to the depth of its immediate task (300 to 400 km), without changing, or with only a single change of siting areas, and also the execution of maneuver by fire along the front and in the depth. In addition, this will promote high tempos of offensive, closer fire coordination of division missiles with army missiles, and of the army's missiles with those of the front.

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An increase in the number of missile mounts in the tank divisions and the tank army will, on the whole, raise the power and effectiveness of the nuclear destruction of the enemy and will make it possible, in the course of an operation, to deliver massed strikes of missiles with chemical and conventional filler against him. The proposed number of missile mounts will increase their number in the present tank army by four times, which, in conjunction with their increasedrange and effectiveness of fire, significantly increases the capabilities of the prospective organization of the tank army. Calculations show, that with this number of missile mounts, it is possible with one salvo to inflict overall incapacitation on personnel in tanks, in an area of up to 270 km^2, which considerably exceeds the nuclear power of an army corps of the US Army, reinforced to the maximum with nuclear means of attack.

The proposed centralization of the means of antiair defense (PVO) in the tank army envisages their concentration in one combat large unit, for example, in a PVO division, directly subordinate to the army commander. This will allow reliable screening of the troops of an army from enemy strikes from the air and will reduce the number of intervening levels of command of these means. A large unit such as a PVO division should take entirely upon itself the function of protection of the troops of the army from the air. With this, the necessity for having an intervening level of command in the person of the chief of PVO troops and his apparatus disappears, as all control of PVO means will be concentrated in the hands of the commander of the division.

The organizational structure of the PVO division should ensure the possibility of its employment both in its entire complement as well as by portions of it, and its technical equipment should ensure successful conduct of antimissile and antiaircraft combat.

As already mentioned, an important role in the improvement of maneuverability of forces and means of a tank army in the course of an operation should be played by its reinforcement with a group of military-transport aviation. In the complement of this group it is proposed to have the prospective transport aircraft and helicopters with

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a large payload capacity, with which it would be possible to carry out the maneuver of the forces and means of a tank army by air.

Maximum use of the capabilities of the new armament depends on the availability in the tank large units and formations of improved means of reconnaissance which ensure the continuous conduct of radiotechnical, aerial, deep and ground reconnaissance. Subunits and units of ground reconnaissance should be air transportable and have tanks with special equipment in their armament.

The increase of the capabilities of reconnaissance to ensure effective delivery of nuclear/missile strikes against the enemy entails the necessity of including new reconnaissance units and subunits in the complement of the tank army, namely: a regiment of aerial reconnaissance, separate radio and radiotechnical battalions and a company of deep reconnaissance. Furthermore, in a regiment of aerial reconnaissance it is advisable to have pilotless means of reconnaissance, and subunits of aviation and radiation reconnaissance. In the divisions, it is necessary to establish reconnaissance battalions with the means of ground, radiotechnical and deep reconnaissance.

The new organization of the tank troops will require introduction of substantial changes in the methods of troop control in a battle and an operation, and along with this, a review of the organizational structure of the organs of command. By now, in comparison with World War II, the methods and forms of conducting a tank army operation have changed considerably and new trends in the employment of tank troops are noted, but the methods of troop control have actually remained as of old. The organizational structure of the staffs of tank large units and formations, above all, should ensure mobility of troop control. For this, in an army and division, it is necessary to abolish the large number of small, incompetent, and secondary staffs, departments, and services.

We cannot disagree with the repeated statements in the press that the mobility of command can be increased if only the chief of staff, the chief of missile troops, the chief of rear services and tank-technical services

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are left directly subordinate to the commander of the army. This will free the commander from the solution of secondary questions and will assure him the opportunity of occupying himself in greater detail with the command of troops in the course of combat operations. 50X1-HUM

In the army staff it is advisable to have an operations-reconnaissance department, consisting of three sections, (planning, information, and regulation of the movement of troops); a communications department; and an engineer-technical department.

In the operations-reconnaissance department the officers of the planning section are called upon to plan the combat operations of troops and the employment of all means of combat. The responsibility of the officers of the information section should include the collection and collation of data on the situation and provision of timely operations-reconnaissance information to troops and staffs. The section for regulating the movement of troops is necessary for the organization of those numerous displacements of troops which take place in the course of the whole operation. The engineer technical department should carry on the preparation of data for the chief of staff on the combat capabilities of the engineer and chemical troops, and also supervise the accomplishment of tasks assigned to them.

An increase of the mobility of the work of the staffs will greatly promote the most rapid introduction of the means of mechanization and automation into the control of troops, and later, also the complex automation systems with electronic computing machines.

This general examination of the organizational structure of the staff of a tank army has in mind the creation of two equal and interchangeable command posts (CP Number 1 and CP Number 2) and a rear control point (TPU). In this, the means of communications of CP Number 1 and CP Number 2 can move along the primary axes of troop operations. The commander and the staff of the army can work at that CP where it will be most convenient for them at any given time, according to the situation. When the commander is working at CP Number 1, his deputy and a 50X1-HUM

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group of officers are working at CP Number 2, ready to take over the control of the troops.

The fundamental postulates expounded in this article on the further development of the organizational forms of tank troops and their staffs can be fully substantiated only by providing them in special and regular troop and command-staff exercises.

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